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and through innumerable concrete instances, the position of the overseer, the patrol system, punishment of slaves, courts for the trials of slaves, the relation between Negroes and whites from the standpoint of cruelty and crime, stealing and harboring slaves, and the kidnapping of free Negroes.

Trading with slaves, the slave trade, runaway slaves, gatherings of Negroes and slave insurrections are exhaustively reviewed, and chapters on abolition and incendiary literature, prohibitions on educating the Negro, manumission, and the free Negro complete the work.

The work is well done. While nothing strikingly new is advanced, either in theory or in fact, the enormous mass of concrete information brought together is a contribution to knowledge and to the literature of the subject. A critical bibliography and reprints of various legal documents apropos the subject are appended.

WALLACE CARSON

*Ponteach or the savages of America.* A tragedy. By Robert Rogers.

With an introduction and a biography of the author by Allan Nevins. (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1914. 261 p.)

The volume under consideration is a handsomely printed octavo of 261 pages, approximately one-third of which is devoted to a reprint of the drama *Ponteach*, and two-thirds to a life of its supposed author, Major Robert Rogers.

To the generation of Americans that witnessed the French and Indian war the name of Major Robert Rogers was a household word. It may well be doubted whether any character in American border annals ever achieved a more well-deserved reputation for brilliant and adventurous exploits, and few careers of brilliant early promise ever suffered a more melancholy decline into ignominy and obscurity than did that of the famous ranger.

Aside from his military exploits Rogers' chief claim to fame rests upon his literary enterprises. Of these, several in number, the drama *Ponteach* was the last. Published anonymously in London in 1766, copies of the original edition have long been exceedingly rare. Francis Parkman knew of but two—his own, and the one in the British Museum. The erudite author of *The literary history of the American revolution* likewise knew of but two, both in Providence, Rhode Island. It may be worth while noting in this connection that another copy is owned by the Wisconsin historical library at Madison.

Although some interest will always attach to Rogers' play, as being one of the earliest examples of dramatic composition by an American author, judged as literature the work has been regarded from the time of its first publication as a flat failure. In this judgment the editor of

the present reprint concurs. "It must seem to any reader who picks up the play for its own sake almost pitifully devoid of intrinsic merits. The web and woof of its style never rise from the commonplace to the even faintly poetical, and all too frequently sink to doggerel and empty declamation"; while "the large outlines of the plot reveal manifold absurdities" (introduction, p. 11). The editor judges, therefore, that only in the historian can the work today inspire more than a transiently curious interest, and that its literary importance does not warrant "a studiously critical attention to the task of prefacing and annoting it," while the work of Parkman has obviated the necessity of devoting any extended attention to the life and character of Pontiac. On the other hand no adequate account of the career of Rogers has yet been written, and accordingly the editor's chief labors have been devoted to supplying one.

Because of this editorial conception the annotation of the drama is but slight and perfunctory; and the reader can look for little more than an accurate reproduction of the original. In the reviewer's opinion the editor's general judgment in blocking out his task is, in the main, to be commended. It follows as a necessary corollary, however, that his editorial labors must be judged chiefly by his life of Rogers, to the writing of which they have been almost wholly confined.

The editor has evidently made an earnest effort to provide a serious and scholarly account of Rogers' life and career. His ancestry and youth, his military exploits, his civil career, and his private life and character are set forth with adequate detail. While much of the narrative has been drawn from Rogers' own works, both text and footnotes give evidence that the author has made an extensive search for other available sources of information; and his narrative may safely be accorded the distinction of constituting the best account yet written of the career of Major Rogers.

Nevertheless the work is liable in several respects to serious criticism and one lays it down with a feeling of regret that the opportunity to produce a really noteworthy biography should not have been improved more fully. That American historical writers of the present generation commonly pay too little attention to the literary qualities of their narrative has long been observed and lamented. The career of Rogers affords ample scope for a stirring narrative. His present biographer has notably failed to produce one. Paragraphs are poorly constructed and frequently of excessive length. At times, too, as the following examples bear witness, the construction of the sentences becomes inexcusably careless: "As summer passed he who had once 'hummed all the great people' had gained nothing" (p. 152). "Not merely had Howe been

assured of his ability and held previous communication with him, but to an army composed largely of men untried in New World methods of fighting, unfamiliar with the enemy, and uncertain of the ground over which it must pass, he seemed a valuable acquisition" (p. 164). "On May 1, 1779, he was back to New York" (p. 168). "He never left the city, and, dying where he had lived, in the parish of Newington Butts, was buried five days later in the grounds of the old church of St. Mary Newington" (p. 172).

Of more serious import than the matter of style and composition is the unreliability of the author's quotations and footnotes. The work abounds in quotations, but a small proportion of which, apparently, are accurate. A score of tests made with books which were readily available revealed but one correct quotation (n. 1, p. 76). It is evident, too, that this high percentage of inaccuracy is due not chiefly to mere carelessness, but to a quite unwarranted practice of emending what is given to the reader under the guise of direct quotation. Words are changed, phrases and sentences are recast, and combinations and excisions are made, with no indication that such liberties have been taken with the originals. Accuracy of statement has not been attained even in the writer's allusions to and quotations from the play itself, which occur in his introduction (pp. 13-14). Two instances of what may be termed double-barreled mistakes have been noted. The Albany conference (p. 38) was held in 1754 instead of 1759, and the footnote reference given is wrong. Again, the quotation given in note 1, page 34, in addition to being badly garbled is ascribed to the wrong book. It is actually to be found in the 1860 edition of the *Memoir of John Stock*. Such evidences of inaccuracy and improper workmanship in matters which may readily be tested necessarily raise the grave question of the validity of the editor's historical processes in general.

The one important qualification upon the commendation accorded the editor's conception of the way his task should be blocked out pertains to the question of the authorship of the drama. While it was currently ascribed to Rogers at the time, the facts remain that it was published anonymously and that the reputed author, by no means noted for his timidity, never openly acknowledged the paternity thrust upon him. How Rogers, renowned ranger and veteran Indian fighter, could have drawn the fantastic picture of the red man set forth in *Ponteach*; or why, needy supplicant for governmental favor and appointment, he should have paused in the midst of his supplications to pen a merciless castigation of the conduct of the very department to which he was seeking admission, are surely matters passing strange. The editor tells just enough concerning the origin and authorship of the play to cause keen

regret that he did not devote some time to the criticism of the play itself with a view to elucidating the mystery of its authorship. A perfunctory and inadequate index concludes the volume.

MILO M. QUAIFE

*A history of the western boundary of the Louisiana purchase, 1819-1841.*

By Thomas Maitland Marshall, Ph. D. [University of California publications in history, II.] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1914. 266 p. \$2.00)

If this book had been called "The Louisiana-Texas boundary, 1819-1841," or better still "The Louisiana-Texas border" its title would come nearer serving as a key to its contents than the one given, since it is not a history of the whole western boundary of the Louisiana purchase but only of that part of it that served to separate Louisiana and one corner of Arkansas from Texas. Perhaps this is the only part of the western boundary of the Louisiana purchase that has any history worth the telling for these years; but, if this be true, it would be better to say so and not arouse hopes which a perusal of the contents of the book fails to fulfill. Far from being a history of the western boundary reaching from the mouth of the Sabine river in the gulf of Mexico to its termination in British territory on the north the material it contains—except perhaps for the introductory chapters—touches only upon that part of the boundary that extends as far as the Red river. Furthermore it is a history of the line fixed by the treaty between the United States and Spain concluded in 1819 and had better be so called rather than a history of the western boundary of the Louisiana purchase. The latter line may have been something very different.

In confining his narrative to the years 1819 to 1841, the author, as he recognizes in his preface, fails to touch upon the history of this boundary line during its formative period. This boundary was determined by the conditions of French occupation of Louisiana and Spanish occupation of Texas during the eighteenth century. The treaty of 1819 between the United States and Spain gave it exact definition in such a way as to leave little room for real controversy thereafter. There could therefore be, in a narrow sense, little of importance to relate concerning this boundary in the years covered by this book. The author seems to recognize this by including an account of the efforts made by the United States to purchase Texas from Mexico and a history of the Gaines expedition from the Louisiana border into Texas. The book is not, therefore, strictly speaking a history of this boundary line, but tells in addition the story of some of the movements that went on over and about the Louisiana-Texas border in these years. And this too without telling anything of the most